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DE RUEHEK #1736/01 3450333
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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8686
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 1840
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE IMMEDIATE 1413
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 0396
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 2252
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1637
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001736

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ FOREIGN MINISTER ON SHOOTING AT AIR BASE:
LET'S WORK THROUGH THIS

REF: A. BISHKEK 1732
[1](#)B. BISHKEK 1722
[1](#)C. BISHKEK 1706

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Classified By: Amb. Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Foreign Minister Jekshenkulov called in the Ambassador late on December 8 to discuss the shooting incident at the Manas Air Base (Ref B). Jekshenkulov gave the Ambassador two diplomatic notes: one requesting cooperation in the investigation, and the second proposing the establishment of a joint commission to consider question connected to the incident, including possible changes to the agreement on status of forces. Jekshenkulov said that public reaction to the shooting had been strong, and some were exploiting it as a political issue. Jekshenkulov said that he did not want the incident to harm bilateral relations, and he hoped that Washington would be "forward leaning" in its response. Jekshenkulov said that it was imperative to work closely with his ministry to try to settle things down over the next two weeks. Jekshenkulov was surprisingly constructive during the meeting, but his words are no guarantee of constructive action. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Late on December 8, Foreign Minister Jekshenkulov called in the Ambassador to discuss the investigation into the shooting incident at the Manas Air Base. Jekshenkulov, who had just returned from Brussels where he had a positive meeting with SCA DAS Evan Feigenbaum, said he did not want the shooting to have a negative impact on the "good" bilateral relationship. Jekshenkulov delivered two diplomatic notes concerning the incident (informal translations e-mailed to SCA/CEN). The first note, which Jekshenkulov said was from the Prosecutor General, requested access to the U.S. airman, access to the gun, and a joint investigation. The Ambassador pointed out that a joint investigation had already been established with the U.S. Air

Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) and the Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior (MVD), and that it was the responsibility of the Kyrgyz Government to coordinate information between its own departments. Jekshenkulov took the point. The Ambassador, nevertheless, undertook to get responses to the requests in the note.

13. (C) The second note proposed setting up a joint commission to work on the following issues: joint investigation of the incident (Note: this has already been done. End note.); plan measures to prevent similar incidents in the future; develop suggestions for changes to the 2001 bilateral agreement that covers that status of U.S. forces in Kyrgyzstan. The note also proposed creating a permanent commission to investigate incidents of damage, destruction of property, death or injury related to the presence of DOD military and civilian personnel in Kyrgyzstan.

14. (C) Jekshenkulov said that he did not want the incident to harm the bilateral relationship. He said that the public had reacted strongly to the shooting of a Kyrgyz national, and following the September accident involving a Kyrgyz passenger plane and a U.S. refueling tanker, people questioned the value of the Base. In addition, many were exploiting the tragedy and stirring up passions for political purposes. Therefore, he said, it was imperative that we work closely together to get through this incident without damaging the bilateral relationship. He said he was doing all he could to resolve the problems and "settle things down," and he hoped Washington would be "forward-leaning" in its approach to the incident. Jekshenkulov said that if the U.S. side were seen as not cooperating, it would be serious. Kyrgyzstan is a partner in the war on terrorism, but this cannot be with losses to Kyrgyz civilians.

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15. (C) Jekshenkulov suggested working quietly together over the next two weeks. One way to do this, he said, was for the U.S. to be responsive to Kyrgyz demands. He also said that it was essential that the investigation be transparent, as there were already wild rumors circulating about the incident. The Ambassador pointed out that such rumors had not come from the U.S. side. Jekshenkulov closed by saying that the government understood that the incident was a tragedy, but it did not want the incident to grow into an even larger issue.

16. (C) Ambassador raised the issue of continued harassment of U.S. democracy NGOs by the Prosecutor General's office (Ref C), and Jekshenkulov promised to address the issue and contact the Prosecutor General next week.

17. (C) Comment: Given Jekshenkulov's past stances, his approach to the meeting was surprisingly constructive. He understands the need to settle down the popular and political reaction to the incident, and to do so quickly before reactions spin out of control. He made clear, however, that the Kyrgyz side had high expectations about U.S. "responsiveness" to Kyrgyz demands in the investigation. We welcome Jekshenkulov's assurances that he will do all he can to settle the situation, but we are cautious, as his words are no guarantee of action.

YOVANOVITCH